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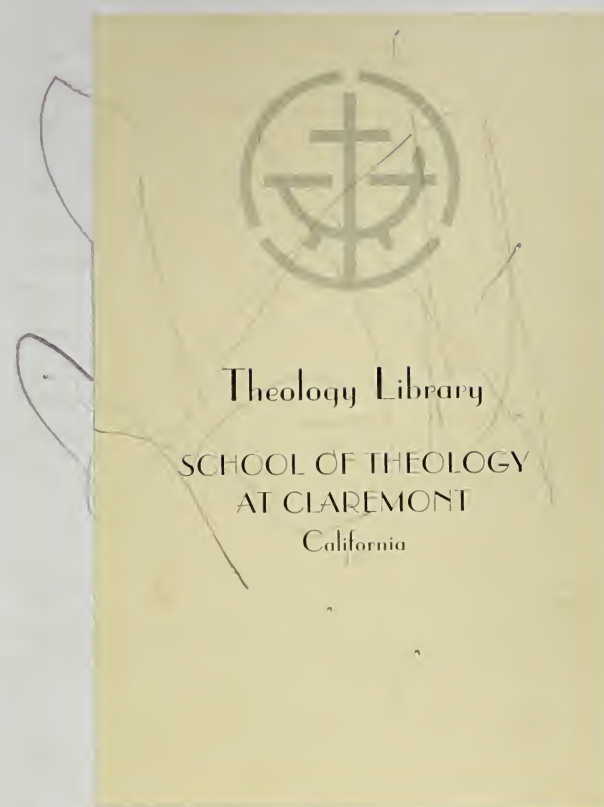


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The
Challenge
of Pierre
Teilhard
de Chardin

CATHERINE ALLER



THE writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the French scientist, have awakened vigorous discussion in scientific, intellectual and religious circles of Europe and have helped stir two Popes to call together at the Vatican the great church council for the consideration of greater world unity.

This essay by Catherine Aller presents Teilhard's profound thought in simple, unambiguous terms, using direct quotations from his major work, *The Phenomenon of Man*, to tell what he actually has said. He was neither pantheist nor atheist; nor was he an iconoclast among spiritual treasures. Those who study his writings recognize that no writer since the first century has so clearly shown the necessity for a religion based on faith *and fact*, not on theory. It is the purpose of this essay to make this clear. The cord that ties the mind and stifles the spirit is woven of prejudice, ignorance and outworn tradition.

More than a million copies of Teilhard's writings have been sold in Europe. The tide now turns to the United States.

The Challenge of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin has not been written solely for Protestant America but for all thinking people of every creed, or of none. It lays the steadying finger of science on the doubts and disbeliefs of the man on the street and on the confused gropings of the man in the pew. It supports Teilhard's challenge that religions and

science are two facets of one and the same truth. They come from the same source and they need each other.

Teilhard's writings form a significant milestone in the awakening of the churches of Christendom to certain vital new facts which must be understood before they can meet with speed and effectiveness the increasingly grave crisis in religion and in church organizations.

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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	7
The Evolution of Consciousness	13
The Noosphere	21
The Place of Christ	24
The Next Step Forward	29
Energy	33
Involution	36
Love	40
Free Will	43
The Christian Mission	48

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to present certain inferences drawn from a very remarkable book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a leading scientist and a deep and sincere Christian thinker. His conclusions regarding the inevitable unity between science and religion have been stirring intellectual and religious circles for several years, both here and abroad. I am writing to no particular denomination or creed, but to all who believe that the world today is desperately in need of intelligent human action united to an awakened and informed love for mankind. When we dropped a bomb on Hiroshima, the very scientists who had invented it turned to the wide world and begged leaders everywhere to awaken the moral and spiritual forces of mankind to avert a more terrible disaster than the world had ever known or than any human being could imagine. *The Phenomenon of Man* contains the answer to that plea.

I am not a profound scholar, only an interested reader of the vintage taught that the atom was the smallest indivisible particle of matter. Even at that age I was protestant enough (and ignorant enough) to think that having gotten it as small as that, why could they not divide it again in some clever way to make it even smaller?

My father was a Congregational minister who read his Greek Testament every day and could quote Latin and Hebrew if he wanted to. His head may have been full of theologies, but his days were full of Christian kindness. I never heard him expound any theological doctrine whatever. As he sent me off to college he said, "Never be reluctant to think out a new idea. I accepted the current opinion that Darwin was a dangerous influence in religion, but when I saw in a biological laboratory the clear evidence of fish antecedence behind the ear of a human embryo, I knew I had to change my mind. It did not change my religion. One truth cannot destroy another truth."

When I first read the English translation of *The Phenomenon of Man*, I longed for my father. I wanted to tell him that the connection between science and religion that Teilhard presents is the kind of truth he would have delighted in, and was written by the kind of man he would have loved. I wanted to tell everybody I knew. Leaders of great issues, writers of editorials, teachers, ministers, all thinking people everywhere on earth need this message; most of them do not know it yet.

But *The Phenomenon* is not an easy book to read. It is rather heavy going for one unaccustomed to scientific matters. Teilhard has a style quite his own, beautiful when you get used to it, but involved. You need a dictionary and an encyclopedia at first.

When no one I talked to seemed as thrilled as I was about it, I decided to write about it in my own words. There are a great many people in the world who, like

myself, have little more than an armchair acquaintance with science or theology but who would catch the fire that blazes from this book if only they found the way to it. To them I would write; this short essay is the result.

I hope I may be forgiven in advance for my temerity, and for any awkwardness in presenting a great and sometimes controversial matter in the unskilled phrases at my command. Most of all, I hope that a seed of truth from a noble mind and a great soul will fall on the soil of open minds. That is the way all great things start, even the Kingdom of Heaven—from very small beginnings, in the sudden jolt of a new idea that you cannot let drop out of your mind, in gleams of hope too wonderful at first to seem credible, in flashes of insight onto a long-pondered problem. These things touch the heart more deeply than intellectual argument.

This is not by any means a digest of the book. It is a gathering up of inferences that may be drawn from it. No summary of *The Phenomenon* can substitute for arriving at the author's meaning from a study of his own words. Quite aside from his main thesis—the fundamental unity between genuine faith and certain theories of modern science—one finds, even in the English translation, logic presented in terms of extraordinary beauty, wit and charm. You become increasingly aware of the character of the author himself, his sincerity, his incisive penetration of the issues in both faith and science, and a warm friendliness that shows through all his work. He has a way of making a perplexing statement clear by throwing in a simple question, by using a side remark

and leaving the reader to continue his own reasoning and come to a spontaneous conclusion. Again and again you will be rewarded by the excitement and relief of coming upon the clear answer to a long-considered problem, the way a flashlight suddenly falls on a dark corner and you see something you had been hunting for a long time. Teilhard addresses his words to scientists in the first place, but you find a thrill in tracing, under his careful phrases, a parallel pattern applying to spiritual issues as well. When you have read the book thoughtfully, you may realize that you will never be the same person again.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born in the south of France in 1881. He died in New York in 1955. He was one of the world's great paleontologists, a distinguished professor of geology at the Catholic Institute of Paris, a director of the National Geological Survey of China, where he played a leading role in the discovery of Peking Man. He was a Jesuit priest whose writings were condemned by the Roman Catholic Church as contradictory to its official doctrines. He was forbidden to publish or to teach in France. He continued his writing and scientific work in other countries. During the Japanese War he was interned in China, where he found time to complete his major work, *The Phenomenon of Man*. It circulated in mimeograph form among friends and scholars; after his death it was printed in France, where its publication was immediately hailed as an event of utmost importance, perhaps the most significant of its kind in the century.

"Teilhard's work is the product of a comprehensive

and coherent vision," writes Julian Huxley (in the Introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 11). "... he has effected a . . . synthesis—of the material and physical world with the world of mind and spirit; of the past with the future; . . . a very remarkable book by a very remarkable human being." "A great man of science and a great soul," wrote Arnold Toynbee. A discerning personal estimate comes from another fellow scientist, a friend of years' standing, co-worker with Teilhard in many countries, Dr. George B. Barbour, Professor of Geology at the University of Cincinnati:

Teilhard's most striking characteristic [is] his humility and his warm, sympathetic humanity. He was utterly without conceit or self-interest. He found it well-nigh impossible to think ill of any man, even when others took advantage of his forbearance and generosity. He showed a keen interest in other people and their work, so that after half an hour in his company a stranger felt he had discovered a friend whom he had known for years. He always seemed surprised that others should hold him in such high affection and respect.

("Memorial to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin," *Proceedings of the Geological Society of America*, annual report for 1955)

The English translation of *The Phenomenon of Man* appeared in New York in 1959, almost one hundred years

to the day after Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* startled the scientific world of London. Darwin's theory of evolution was repudiated by most scientists of that day, and was unanimously rejected by the world of religion. Only a few scientists stood up for his right to state his honest conclusions, right or wrong, before the jury of his scientific peers. Vehement among the critics were such men as Thomas Carlyle, Louis Agassiz and Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. One of his few supporters was Thomas Huxley, who called himself "Darwin's bulldog" because of his defense of his friend against the merciless ridicule of the scientific world and the bitter attacks of churchmen. It is an interesting coincidence that the introduction to the English translation of *The Phenomenon of Man* was written by Julian Huxley, grandson of Thomas Huxley.

C. A.

THE CHALLENGE OF PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

The Evolution of Consciousness

In every age there must be a restatement of fundamental issues. The uprush of scientific discovery and its tremendous impact on life and thought has brought unparalleled confusion and anxiety. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in *The Phenomenon of Man*, goes straight to the roots of this anxiety with unprecedented answers for our comfort and confidence. Without putting science, which is the result of deep human thinking, above religion, which is the fruit of still deeper human experience, he shows them to be two aspects of the same basic truth. Scientists have been approaching world problems from their own point of view, using their own exact, patient methods. Religion, often handicapped by a backward-sucking wind of outgrown belief and tradition, is out of touch with certain essential facts facing the world today.

Teilhard points out that the physical laws of the universe are to genuine religion what the physical blueprint of a *house* is to the *home* it outlines. In their own ways they deal with the same thing. The blueprint is essential to the orderly construction of the building, but it cannot show the home life of the persons who dwell within it. Science is showing us the *method* God has

used in creating, developing and maintaining His universe. It is the business of religion to make that clear, *fortified* by science, not by opposing it. When religion refused to admit a round earth, it was in conflict with a scientific fact and with an incontestable establishment of divine law. When some scientists deny the existence of a God in the universe, they in turn conflict with an infinite truth—a fact that no scientist has made more clear than Teilhard de Chardin.

When the man on the street concludes that he is doomed to an inevitable death because all men appear to die, Teilhard shows him by a magnificent array of scientific facts that man does not die but that, like all things we see or know, man must come to the point of a *change of state*—which is a wholly different thing. Water changes its state when it comes to the boiling point. It does not cease to *be*. The future existence of man, which religion has long clung to in faith, is seen ever clearer by the application of universal laws now presented for the world's scientific study by *The Phenomenon of Man*. Science is doing for us what faith alone can no longer do.

A brief review of some facts accepted today by leading scientists will be useful as a background for what follows. In fairness to Teilhard and to the reader, I have given the number of the page for quotations taken directly from *The Phenomenon of Man* so that one may judge their relevance for one's self. The edition used is the translation by Bernard Wall, published by Harper & Brothers in 1959. (In the later paper-bound edition the page numbering is the same.)

We must think of the world as ONE WHOLE, made up of countless millions of individual units. Just as a man is the unit of human society, so the atom is the basic unit of the planet, "the building block of the universe." It is a tiny system of energy, a power plant containing the greatest reserve of power ever unlocked by man. Whatever space we may think it occupies, it radiates in that space and completely fills it, just as a man, standing on any spot of the planet, with an adequate television set could see and hear all that is going on in the earth. One man's mind may be said to *potentially* fill the whole earth, and every individual man may be thought of as the center of the planet. The entire world, you can see, may be gathered up in every one of us; man is *in* the world and the whole world is in him.

Mighty as is the energy within the atom, it cannot move to build up the planet by any power of its own. There is a strange and unexplained relationship between atoms and the stars. The cosmic energy that comes from beyond the galaxies of space is connected with the concentration of atoms in the building up of the universe.

Historically, the stuff of the universe goes on becoming concentrated into ever more organised forms of matter. But *where*, then, do these metamorphoses take place . . . ? Is it indifferently, at any point in space? Not at all, as we all know, but only in the heart and on the surface of the stars. . . .

The stars are laboratories in which the

evolution of matter proceeds according to determinate . . . rules. . . . (Pp. 49, 50)

This does not mean, however, that the influence of one single atom fills all space; the molecule, with its constituent atoms, is the unit of all matter. Nevertheless, the reverberations of a given atom *may* be limitless. Applying the analogy again to man, one individual man, Einstein, discovered the formula for energy, $E=MC^2$, out of which thousands of individuals, working in groups or singly, contrived the bombs that man may now drop on any city. Every individual man, woman and child on the earth today is affected thereby. So we can see that an atom, just as a man, *may* cancel out, dissipate or augment the influence of one individual or of groups of individuals.

Nothing could have come into being, nothing could move today, were it not for energy that comes to us from beyond this planet. Science has the name and a formula for it, but it is, thus far, a mystery. Could it not be recognized as the same power, the same mystery, that religion calls God? The Christian creed applies to Him not a mathematical formula but the simple, inclusive statement *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth*. Science and religion are expressing their beliefs in different ways, but are they not referring to the same essential mysterious *reality*?

Even more significant is the statement of leading scientists today that *consciousness begins within the atom*. That is to say the atom holds the potential of thought in somewhat the same way that a seed holds

the undeveloped flower. Thought in embryo lies in the atom. This is what two well-known scientists have to say about it:

. . . we must infer the presence of potential mind in all material systems, by backward extrapolation from the human phase to the biological, and from the biological to the inorganic.—JULIAN HUXLEY (Introduction to *The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 16)

We do not find obvious evidence of life or mind in so-called inert matter, and we naturally study them most easily where they are most completely manifested; but if the scientific view is correct we shall ultimately find them, at least in rudimentary form, all through the universe.—J. B. S. HALDANE

If some initial degree of consciousness is found in the atom, that can mean nothing less than that *consciousness is all through the earth*, is basic to the universe, for the atom is its basic substance, its building block. It has been common to think of matter as something *wholly other* than mind. Even more, throughout history runs a tendency in religion to look down on matter as definitely lower than man's mind. So it is in one sense, but in the same way that the embryo is less than man. Now we have to see that matter is the same *in kind* as thought, a different stage or condition of the same reality.

Religion has taught the absolute inferiority of matter—that the spirit of man is in some way sacred but that matter is not. Some deny the reality of matter; others practice the subjugation of the body to the spirit. Without disputing the values involved in such theories and disciplines, it needs to be seen now that the seed of mind in an atom is essentially and fundamentally good, not evil, and that if spirit is holy, matter is also holy. We must keep our minds open to the reception of further ideas before we resist this as not being true. If true, it is not going to destroy any of the values of faith.

Teilhard points out that in the very lowest stages of evolution, before man's reasoning mind developed, and consciousness existed only in its embryonic stage, so to speak, there were billions upon billions of particles, specks in the "primordial dust of consciousness," awaiting their chance to grow as each responded to the quickening touch of energy from cosmic regions beyond the stars. Progress upward on the scale of being may have at first been according to mathematical laws of chance. Out of the very prodigality of numbers some at least would arrive at the next higher step. At each advancing stage of evolution, consciousness evolved and was embodied in a more complicated outer form. A life cell is more involved than an atom; a bird is more intricately constructed than an earthworm—is more *alive*, so to speak. Teilhard refers to this as "the cosmic law of Complexity-Consciousness"—his own phrase for a recognized law of evolution (p. 301n).

Man's consciousness is the high point of evolution thus far achieved on earth. Man gives the fullest re-

sponse to the energy that controls creation. His brain is the most complex development on the planet. He alone of all the earth "knows, and knows that he knows." He exceeds in complexity—in consciousness—anything we know about in the universe. Back of him lies every step in the long process from the beginning of the planet until now. As certainly as the roots of a tree go down into the earth for life, so man's roots are in the earth, down to the very beginning, and for the same reason—for the development and progress of life itself. He was not created by the miracle of one breath only. A million million miracles of life have been breathed into man, and are still being breathed into him as his amazing ability to think continues to expand minds all over the earth to take in a new awareness of the setting in which we move and have our being.

Nor have we any right to think that this is the last stage of our evolution. In *The Phenomenon of Man* we are brought to realize that a further evolution of man must be along the line of still greater mental development, drawing mankind into a new unity of conscious life. That a further development leading to a new phase or stage of life is possible in a future stage of existence seems to many men today simply one of the many superstitious beliefs that have befuddled men's minds, a wish, an escape from the fear of death as the end of all. To the majority it is a blind faith for which there is and can be no real proof. But in science? To a growing number of scientific men the idea of some future evolutionary step in the progress of mankind and the planet is not nonsense. This great Christian hope as Teilhard dis-

cusses it, united to the advancing theories of modern scientists, brings definite strength and comfort to man in his unquenchable longing for eternal life, the ever-unfolding and flowering of man's individual personality.

Is not this scientific theory alone a sufficient reason for us to reconsider what the Christian's attitude should be in relation to modern science? The truth will become clear in due time, whatever we now believe: because it is the truth, and cannot hurt any other truth. There are traditions or beliefs in the church today and attitudes about scientific facts that can be as painlessly given up as the belief in a flat earth. Let us stand to our guns. Genuine religion has nothing whatever to fear from the honest gropings for truth on the part of science. On the contrary, we have very much to gain, and the sooner we see this the greater the influence of the church will become. We need that strength today as never before in history.

It was necessary to trace these steps backward until we come to the time when the earth first folded in on itself and became a globe—necessary because we must learn to think of man as truly *a phenomenon of this entire planet*, not merely the latest development of it. We want to go on from here and try to understand what these miracles of history imply. What is the divine purpose and secret in man? What is the purpose of this great movement of evolution which has been calling up ever-advancing stages of life out of the shadowy outlines of the past?

The Noosphere

The greatest revelation open to science today is to perceive that everything precious, active, and progressive originally contained in that cosmic fragment from which our world emerged, is now concentrated and crowned by the noosphere. (P. 183)

Teilhard uses the word "noosphere" to include all the realm that man sees, does, thinks. The reflecting mind of man, in other words. It comes from a Greek word meaning "mind." The scientific view is that when the earth was flung, a blazing molten mass, from the sun, everything that has developed since upon it was *potentially* present, awaiting its time for development under the right conditions. No one knows certainly why or when this cosmic event occurred.

Some thousands of millions of years ago, not, it would appear, by a regular process of . . . evolution, but as the result of some unbelievable accident (a brush with another star? an internal upheaval?) a fragment of matter composed of some par-

particularly stable atoms was detached from the surface of the sun . . . this fragment began to condense, roll itself up, to take shape, containing within its globe . . . the future of man. (P. 67)

Science has now abandoned the theory that life in some way floated in from somewhere else. Life developed from the sprawl of molecules lying upon the face of the waters that once covered the planet. In the course of millions of years, biological forms of life spread over the globe in plant, sea life, insect, bird, animal and, finally, in man. One day the pressures of growth in the brains of some of the primates reached a degree of tension; and just as water, when it comes to the boiling point, changes form and bursts into steam, so the first thought burst into historical birth on the planet. It must have been dim, groping, exciting wonder. All the long way up from the atom it had come, as each stage of evolving life, each grouping of atoms and molecules, answered the touch of energy from beyond the stars. "Man's incredible ability to think" was provided for him millions of years before a form of life appeared able to use it.

From man's conscious mind *the energy that is Life* has drawn all that lies beyond the heritage of the brute—all language, music, dreams, all our great ideals and most profound spiritual concepts. All history lay inherent within that first dim thought—even the cross beyond the gates of Jerusalem, even "earth's greatest treasure, one forsaken grave." How did they come to pass, step

by step, over the unnumbered centuries? Science, taking no step beyond the bounds of physical laws as it measures them, calls it energy, working by the system of evolution. But some of us call it God, working according to His own marvelous plan to bring into being *persons* capable of responding to Him in a spirit of intelligence and a spontaneous love. Evolution is evidently God's way with us—His method of bringing out of this earth, as soon as the developing stages of consciousness could accept it, acting, thinking, loving persons. Energy must be seen not as the impersonal, unfeeling statement $E = MC^2$, a formula on the graph of science; energy is God's living, moving love . . . His call to His entire cosmos.

The Place of Christ

Who hath wrought and done it,
calling the generations from the
beginning? I, the Lord, the Al-
mighty.—ISAIAH 41.4

Who, as I, shall *call* and set
it in order?—ISAIAH 41.7

I will *call* for the corn and
increase it.—EZEKIEL 36.79

Man is God's "image and likeness" because only man
can reason, think these things out. Only man can return
God's call in *conscious* love. He can love his fellow man,
and he can delight in the intricate sublime world in
which God's love has encompassed and held him.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out like shining from shook foil:
It gathers to a greatness.

—GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

. . . it is in no way metaphorical to say
that man finds himself capable of . . .
discovering his God in the whole length,

breadth and depth of the world in move-
ment. To be able literally to say to God that
one loves him, not only with all one's body,
all one's heart and all one's soul, but with
every fibre of the unifying universe—that
is a prayer that can only be made in space-
time. (P. 279)

Clearly this is not the usual concept of pantheism.
Webster defines that as "The doctrine that the universe
is *God* . . . that there is no God but the combined
forces and laws which are manifested in the existing
universe." But evolution now shows that the earth is
permeated by consciousness, from the bottom of the
scale to the top. In the lowest stages of inorganic matter,
before reflective thought had developed, God of neces-
sity acted in the impersonal aspect of physical energy.
Later He worked "under the veil of a more conscious
biological response to his call." Over immense periods
of time "the Prime Mover-ahead" has obscurely stirred
the inner heart of all lower evolutionary forms into ex-
pressing themselves in widely spread masses until we
find ourselves in the complex and infinitely varied set-
tings of today. From the first to the present, God is the
Creator of man and the universe, and man is the *creation*
of God, wholly dependent on the initiative of his Crea-
tor. Underneath are the everlasting laws of His plan—
evolution. The Lord has been our dwelling place in all
generations of our evolution.

It is now time to answer the question that must have been in the minds of all Christians who have read this far. What does *The Phenomenon of Man* have to say about the place of Christ in the widening perspective of life today? Teilhard gives an answer that gathers up all the meaning and value of our faith and quickens with deeper insight our love and adoration for Christ. It seems to me that no one since the writers of the New Testament has offered so great comfort and inspiration.

✓ The most precious possession of the planet is Jesus Christ. He is the one proof the world has been given of "the plan of God," as Paul calls it. He is the only key to the divine order and cosmic law of evolution. As "son of man" he inherited, as do we all, the long development of evolution from the atomic stage of consciousness up to man. But he is also infinitely more than that. He is the first and only example of God's *ideal* for Man, the kind of person He planned to bring forth from the planet from the beginning. "This is my beloved son, listen to him." ✓ Jesus stood in two worlds, two orders of life, knowing there was another stage to come. He called it "the Kingdom of Heaven." Today science is considering seriously the possibility of a stage yet to be. Jesus knew that he was the highest possible example of man in this present attainment of being. He was in touch with man in this stage, and also one with his Father. He understood God's plan for mankind. Because of the unity and understanding of the plan, he could speak with authority over the confusion of mind, the ailing bodies, the fear-ridden convictions of his day and of our present noosphere.

A lower state of being cannot fully understand a

higher state. The animal world cannot comprehend matters that are clear to man. Developments that are "natural" to advanced minds still seem miraculous to the ignorant and superstitious today. In a world that had no knowledge of science as we know it, Jesus had to teach men to have faith in *him*. For two thousand years men have taken him in faith. Until now, there has been no way of seeing Jesus' life as also a demonstration of science. His statement "No man cometh unto the Father save by me" can now be seen as a statement of a scientific fact, not merely a requirement for a personal confidence in him as an individual, although it is that also. We have no way of going on into the coming next stage of evolution without in some way understanding Christ's knowledge of life and his laws for our progress "that ye love one another." "Have faith in God; Have faith in me." "As the branch cannot bring forth fruit unless it abides in the vine, no more can you unless you abide in me."

We come to see that, for all the wonder of his life, it was not *miraculous*. He lived a way of life beyond our present understanding. He was as normal as all that belongs to this planet—as normal as all the rest of God's universe.

He was a step in evolution beyond the highest attainment of man before he came. He said, "I am not of this world" (not of this stage of evolution), and turning to his disciples, he said, "You are not of this world; I have called you out of it." What is implied in this statement today for everyone who follows after him? Simply this: that the noosphere already contains those who have begun to see these things not only in faith but today in

science. We may now go on with both faith in Christ and some understanding of the fundamental laws of evolution that he lived consciously, historically before us. He is not to be thought of superstitiously, but rather as the first, the *only*, begotten son of God until then. He will always be the *first*. He is today above everything and every person in the noosphere. He told men, however, that what he did they would do, where he was going they were to go, what the Father told him he would continue to tell them—if they would listen.

No man ever thought as Jesus thought, spoke as he spoke or accepted from the Father an understanding of His plan for the universe. He bent a downward-sinking trend of evolution into an upward-soaring curve. It has continued ever since the hour of his return to his defeated disciples from a stone tomb. Although they could not know the science that he saw as the divine permission for his return, they were so filled with faith that he had taken a revolutionary step in human life that they went out with that faith to their contemporaries and changed the course of history.

You and I today may see it, thanks to scientific developments, as THE EVENT in history. It foreshadows the end of the present stage of evolution, the noosphere, and the promise of a coming higher one. Higher but *not* miraculous. Brighter than the light of the sun—and just as natural. Until men can see that Jesus was a man in history who saw God's laws and trusted in what he knew as truth given by God, and so was "one with the Father," the world will forfeit the fullest understanding of scientific development. Until the churches today can

stop being shocked at the connection of planetary law with divine law and can see that they are truth from the same Mind, they will be marking time—and slipping backward.

Doubtless many facts about Jesus' life have been wrapped in superstitious story—have been misunderstood, wrongly presented. But whatever traditions and false teachings have grown up about Jesus of Nazareth, they matter relatively very little if we can grasp the actual science of the greatest thing that ever happened in the earth.

The Next Step Forward

Teilhard de Chardin did not exclude from Christianity anyone who expressly or by implication believes in LOVE. He knew that the hour is not the same for every man to realize that this Essential Love is to be found at the very heart of the Universe. (From an editorial comment in the first edition of the *Cahiers of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*)

Paul shot a beam of light into the future that neither theology nor science has yet grasped:

[God] has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, accord-

ing to his purpose which *he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth. In him . . . according to the purpose of his will, we who . . . have believed in him [Christ], were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.*—EPHESIANS 1:10–14 R.S.V.

Another translation of this passage and a comment on it from a modern English Bible is illuminating:

God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan and it is this: He purposes in His sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or earth shall find its perfect fulfillment in him.

[Footnote:] And here is the staggering thing—that in all which will one day belong to him we have been promised a share . . . as the first to put our confidence in Christ. You were, so to speak, stamped with the promised Holy Spirit as guarantee of purchase.—J. B. PHILLIPS (*The Bible in Modern English*, p. 411)

The Holy Spirit . . . Another mystery of the church that has been long wrapped in confusion. It is now clari-

fied in the light of inferences we may draw from Teilhard's scientific faith. Seeing beyond other men's ability, Christ promised that until "the end of the world" (the folding in of the noosphere at the coming next stage of evolution), a sense of the inward nearness of God, an awareness of a Presence, living but unseen, would be increasingly evident, as well as the experience of an interpenetration of the group by a new spirit of love and a sense of "oneness" with each other.

Until Paul's statement of spiritual truth could be seen as also a statement of scientific fact, a great deal of Christian doctrine has had to be taken on faith. Faith has been heretofore sufficient for some: it has not been enough for others of sincere mind and genuine love for mankind. Faith without the stability offered by science is no longer enough to satisfy the intelligent, informed minds of today. Science has been slowly (and quite unintentionally!) pointing out facts that support the very foundations of Christianity. We have come to a point where faith, "the substance of things hoped for," has been granted certain facts about *things as they are*. The former faith will not continue to draw men until the things that are abidingly true in science are set forth plainly as abidingly true also in religion. Today we need a large dose of scientific fact, accepted with sincere and humble admission of former ignorance, apathy and complacency.

These conclusions may seem dogmatic theological assertions or unsound applications of scientific theory. At present they will be rejected by many in both camps. Increasingly, however, they are being seen by sincere

and thoughtful people inside the church and in scientific circles. It is the challenge made today to awaken all of us to a new understanding of Christianity in the light of the contributions of modern science.

To live and develop the Christian outlook needs an atmosphere of greatness and of connecting links. The bigger the world becomes . . . the more will the perspective of the Incarnation triumph. That is what believers are beginning, much to their surprise, to find out. Though frightened for a moment by evolution, the Christian now perceives that it offers him nothing but a magnificent means of feeling more at one with God and of giving himself more to him. (P. 296)

That, in brief, is part of what *The Phenomenon of Man* is telling the world today about Jesus Christ. It reaffirms his place in history and in religion, thanks to the progress in knowledge of many of our still strangely blind scientists. Thanks, also, to the insight and dedication of Teilhard de Chardin.

We have been given the honor and the responsibility of existing during a great crisis in the history of man, a critical change in the noosphere. "We stand face to face with all the grandeur, the unprecedented grandeur of the phenomenon of man" (p. 214). We have become conscious of the tide of energy that is bearing us along in its majestic movement. It will enter into our psychic

processes with a higher and close-knit form of collective thinking. A new type of man will develop beyond man as we now know him. The change may come slowly, without our full realization of its depth and its meaning. But it is certain to come.

Energy

A truth, once seen by even one human being, ends by being accepted by all the world. This is a fact expressed by Jesus of Nazareth.

. . . everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and psalms must come true. . . . That is how it was written and why it was inevitable that Christ should suffer and rise from the dead. . . . So must the change of heart which leads to . . . forgiveness . . . be proclaimed . . . to all nations. . . . You are witnesses of these things. Now I hand over to you the message from the Father.—
LUKE 24:44-49 (Phillips trans.)

This seems a more explicit commission for the Christian Church than his words to Peter.

It is important for us to understand that there is everywhere in the universe a certain pattern of a central point enclosed in a surrounding circle or sphere. We

find it in atom, cell, seed, star, and in the round earth itself. The inner central point controls the arrangement of the outer surrounding circumference. Energy from the cosmic "point beyond time and space" touches the nucleus, the heart of the atom, to affect the electrons surrounding it. The relation of inner center to outer circle, the physical pattern of atomic energy, is the pattern of energy in all things.

To the inner energy Teilhard has given the name "radial energy"; it radiates its received energy to its outer component, which he calls "tangential energy," meaning "touching." The circumference is in contact with the tangential energies of others next it. In a chapter of *The Phenomenon* called "The Within of Things" Teilhard concludes that mental energy and physical energy must be two aspects of the same thing, and that the inner radial energy is more important. This is a theory still under dispute in science. In order to avoid "a fundamental dualism" at once impossible and unscientific, he urges that scientists study "the within" of phenomena. Heretofore science has been concerned with physical matter that could be weighed, measured, seen, felt. We cannot longer ignore the study of the inner side of things. There could be no developments of science if the thinking, reflecting mind of man were ignored as "a queer exception" not within the legitimate realm of physics.

The time has come to realise that an interpretation of the universe [is] unsatisfying unless it covers the interior as well as the exterior of things; mind as well as matter.

The true physics will be that which will [include] man is his wholeness in a coherent picture of the world. (Pp. 35-36)

The stage setting of history that brought Christ historically into human view is in strict accord with the universal pattern of inner central point and outer supporting circle. It began with Abraham's individual conviction that there could be but *one God*. He left his Chaldean home to establish more clearly, in the small circle of his own family, the faith to which he was committed. In time Moses enlarged the circumference about this inner radial faith to include as its tangential the Hebrew nation. This group conserved, with the deepening insight of leaders, kings, poets, prophets, the basic faith that out of their circle would come a blessing "that should be to all people." The nature of the promised blessing was obscure, controversial, but there were always those who clung to it in hope and faith.

By the time of the Roman conquest of Israel, all men were looking for "one who should come." The nation of Israel was in "involution"—a term applied when one stage of evolution is in process of ripening for a succeeding one. Jesus Christ emerged from the central radial of Abraham's faith to become the central radial point of the world. History before him led up to him. History since his coming has been under the influence of that event. About him as a person, the living example of the phenomenon of man, the world revolves.

When Jesus came . . . with his divine compassion
and great gospel of Peace,
Men hailed him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ
crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.
For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame,
in few years with few friends founded a world-empire
wider than Alexander's and more enduring;
since from his death it took its everlasting life.
His kingdom is God's kingdom and his holy temple
not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man.
They who understand not cannot forget, and they
who keep not his commandments call him Master and
Lord.
He preach'd once to the herd, *but now calleth the wise.*

—ROBERT BRIDGES, *The Testament of Beauty*

Involution

When a stage of evolution is drawing to its conclusion and another stage is about to develop from it, there is increasing tension in the first one. This period of stress is "involution." It applies to physical phenomena as well as to mental development.

When the pressures within the element become great enough, there comes, after an inevitable period of groping for an outlet to freer conditions, emergence from the binding encirclement of one stage into the larger freedom of the next. The seed bursts out of its pod; the bird

pecks its way out of its shell; human beings demand release from hampering conditions and emerge into freer groupings. Every advance in inner consciousness is embodied in a more complex outer structure. *All emergence from one stage of evolution to the next is due to pressure within the center of the organism involved.*

From the cell to the thinking animal, as from the atom to the cell, a single process (a physical kindling or concentration) goes on without interruption and always in the same direction. (p. 169)

. . . the instinctive gropings of the first cell link up with the learned gropings of our laboratories. . . . The passing wave that we can feel was not formed in ourselves. It comes to us from far away; it set out at the same time as the light from the first stars. It reaches us after creating everything on the way. (P. 223)

In the minds of men today the world over, within the cover of the mental envelope of the noosphere, there is a groping, pondering, seeking process at work. It stirs in religion, politics, science. Communism, democracy, racial struggles, are fencing, encountering, colliding with one another. The world is round and we are packed in tightly; we cannot get away from each other, as in former times. The impact of minds upon other minds, of groups on other groups, becomes daily sharper. Turmoil in the center is making the skin tighter on the cir-

cumference. The world and all its inhabitants are in involution, and for the first time in history *on a world scale*. It means a change of state in the total noosphere, revolution on a world-wide basis, of the systems of thought and action over the entire globe. And difficult as these days seem, a new world is being born—at our cost. It is a help just to understand this. It is imperative that the directions given us in Christ, the radial central heart of the world, be applied, brought into action, to strengthen the tangential circle, the entire noosphere.

. . . something is developing in the world by means of us, perhaps at our expense
. . . in the great game that is being played, we are the players as well as the cards and the stakes. Nothing can go on if we leave the table. (P. 229)

This awakening, this intuition, is bringing us at the moment uncertainty and an anxiety our forebears could not have dreamed of. They believed the earth was about six thousand years old. We know it to be some ten thousand million years old. They thought of time and space as two entirely separate compartments; into space they put objects; into time they put events, history. Now we know they are not separate but are joined together. Everything we know about is born and develops in time-space. This relatively new concept is called *duration*, and to many of us it is a difficult thing to grasp. It becomes clearer as one thinks longer about it. We are evolving ourselves as we grasp it!

For instance, an apple, if you start with the seed, grows continuously through successive stages—roots, stalk, branches, leaves, flower, fruit and back to seed again. *Duration is the whole process*, with all it involves. It takes time, space, earth, air, rain, sun to produce all of it—Operation Apple. You can see that the apple is inextricably a part of the entire universe, woven into it. So are you, and I, and everyone else and every single thing that exists. The stuff of all the earth is *one whole*. There is not an isolated item or fact in the entire cosmos; “all is connected with all.” “The mesh of the universe is the universe itself. . . .

“The stuff of the universe, woven in a single piece according to one and the same system, but never repeating itself from one point to another, represents a single figure. Structurally, it forms a Whole.” (P. 45.)

But duration can be a confusing, even terrifying thought. No longer may we think of ourselves as living out our private lives in a small and tidy world. We are part of everything and everyone. We can feel lost and insignificant in a universe beyond our comprehension. Vague anxieties beset us. Suppose the earth were to break up, and crumble back into the “granular dust of atomic particles,” as did the mastodons and the giant forests. Are we contending in ignorance, vulnerability and fear on the brink of an abyss that may plunge us all down to nothingness? Would the game of life then be worth the candle? If men were to believe that civilization would come to an end in ten years by war or catastrophe, or, by good luck, in ten million years, what would be the incentive to carry on a few years, even a

few days longer? Man feels at times that the earth is no longer his own and his children's home. Bombs, fallout, a passing comet, an invading army, may wipe out the struggle of millions of generations in a total death. Not even a memory would be left behind, for there would be no one left who could remember. This is a time of woe for those who have neither old-time faith nor present insight to comfort them. It accounts for most of the broken minds and pitiful suicides of today. Desperately this generation needs to be shown the clean-cut chart of science and to lay it side by side with our renewed faith.

Love

Lest we forget, or get things out of focus or become confused, and panic at the strangeness of the stage we have reached, let us look carefully at the blueprint which science—in the nick of time—has given us. The initiative for all that has ever happened, and all that ever will happen, lies not in ourselves; it is in the energy that lies beyond us and abides within us. Everything on this planet, everything in the universe, is continually in contact with, and under the control of, a super-energy beyond the stars and in the heart of us all. Were there not this energy radiating toward us, around us and within us every instant, eliciting response from atom to man, there could be no movement, no stir, on the part of anything

in creation. And at this point the knowledge given us by science leads directly to the teachings of faith.

There is, in all certainty and truth, a Plan of God—the Divine Law of Evolution. It has always been in operation, with an infinitude of wisdom and boundless power. Not the vast, impersonal energy which is all that a chart of science can show of it, but Love that ensures provision for the eternal life of all who are guided by it, a love that is concerned for the flight of the sparrow from the branch to the ground, the fragile beauty of a flower it has perfected over eons of tenderness and care. His tender mercies are over all His works. The infinite Planner is not so lost in His countless systems of worlds that He does not heed *all* prayers, even the smallest and humblest. Wherever we are, He is there; whatever we think, He knows. All time-space is under his control. He knows the number, place, movement of every atom, and has known, from the beginning. He held the universe in the hollow of His hand before time began.

In the due processes of evolution, man can ultimately emerge from his own concept of time and space into God's freedom of it. The divine Mind is infinite in knowledge; in God is no element of chance. God so loves His world that He wills nothing He creates to perish. He gives to all who respond to Him freedom to go forward into "life everlasting." He does not leave one soul forever in outer darkness. Whoever must return to dust must have his chance again, even if it costs him a million million years of dreadful night. For there cannot exist, in a system of *infinite Love*, a system of eternal damnation. Only in the limits and confusions of a noo-

sphere that cannot see beyond the set bounds of its own stage of evolution—yet unfinished—could such a perversion of Love obtain credence.

Which is by no means to say that *within* the limits of the present noosphere there is not perfect justice—and hope—mathematically perfect! “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Who fails to give back to his God the response required for going *forward* into Life must come sometime, somewhere, to the essential decision again. Most of God’s ways are past our finding out in the time-space concept of our *now*. But the decision is always ours:

What makes and classifies a “modern” man (and a whole host of our contemporaries is not yet “modern” in this sense) is having become capable of seeing not in terms of space and time alone, but also of *duration*, or—and it comes to the same thing—of biological space-time; and above all having become incapable of seeing anything otherwise—anything—*not even himself*. (P. 218)

In this stage of evolution, we are conditioned by time-space. Duration seems a long-time process—the cosmic point in space afar and cold. But this is only the *graph* of man’s present status, the chart drawn by science, not the actual reality. We do not think of our home as the blueprint seen before the house was built. Even now, although we have not yet reached the final stage

of our journey into the next step, we can realize that God, acting in accord with His law of evolution is not “Out There” but *here*, organically and spiritually in our own hearts. “Am I a God at hand and not a God afar off?” saith the Lord. “Do I not *fill heaven and earth*?” saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:23.) The far point is no farther from us than our own thinking mind, our own responding heart. God’s nearness fills the earth in its present state; the noosphere, the coming step God-ward, is already bright with the light of His promise. In the here and now of the way, we are open to the fact, realized by Christ, “that all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee . . . that they also may be one in us” (John 17:21). “. . . this state is obtained not by *identification* (God becoming all) but by the . . . action of love (God all *in everyone*). And that is essentially orthodox and Christian.” (P. 308.)

Free Will

What are we to think about the very evident presence of evil in the world, past and present? With a God whose infinite power is love, what about those long dark ages before man reached intelligent thinking? At the very basis of the evolutionary plan lay an element of chance or probability. Did there need to be a falling back into the dust of inorganic particles, or dead ends of material experiments? Why has there been “the unestimated sum

of human pain"—to use Winston Churchill's striking phrase—and all the pride, self-seeking, deliberate deceit, malice and inhumanity of man to man? Did God permit evil at any time and allow it to persist even until today?

The ancient mystery of human woe! Has it yet received its final answer? Jesus accepted evil as in some way necessary in this present noosphere. "Sufficient *unto the day* is the evil thereof." "Be not overcome by evil but overcome evil by good." "Let wheat and tares grow together *until the harvest*." "Deliver us from evil." Can the Divine Law of Evolution give us a clue to the heart-breaking *present* necessity? I believe it can. The friend of Teilhard de Chardin quoted above, writes this explanation of the paradox:

God wrote into the blue-print of the universe the provision that from the first there was to be freedom. Freedom to meet and overcome obstacles stimulates growth of muscle and character. There was from the outset the chance that mistakes would be made, with resulting failure. In consequence, evolution was no straight-forward progress, but alternations of advance, delay or reversion, with many faulty attempts before the onward step was made.

—GEORGE B. BARBOUR

An automatic robot was evidently not God's plan for man. Had He wanted such a creature, He could have made one! He calls for responding intelligence and

love. In back of man as he stands today are the billions of replies to God's call. Teilhard points out that there is always a chance that some within our present noosphere may not find their way to the right answer that leads forward into Life. There is the possibility of a reversal of progress, or a postponement.

In the unchanging law of evolution it is only the forward step that prevents reversal. Man is "the leading offshoot of evolution" now. The responsibility lies on him today to accept the right lead given him in Christ. To make this clear is the responsibility of the church today. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." There is the central point within its surrounding circle again! But it is the *cross* of Christ that must also be lifted up, and that entails for man the giving up of self in service for others. Not by domination, self-will, pride, selfish interests, is the cross uplifted. Not alone by *doing things* for man, but by loving man, *just as he is*, as Christ loves him.

To bring us into existence [life] has from the beginning juggled . . . with too many improbabilities for there to be any risk whatever in committing ourselves further and following right to the end. If it undertook the task it is because it can finish it, following the same methods and with the same infallibility with which it began.

The "improbabilities" may not be taken to imply that God experimented or juggled in His creation. In the

lower stages of evolution His plan for man's ultimate freedom of choice involved mathematical chance, or "directed choice." In the noosphere man's freedom of choice permits him to decide Yes or No in answer to God's calls. God's response to man's Yes gives man his forward move into life more abundant. The infinite waiting patience of a divine Love is God's answer to man's No. This illustrates the element of *love* in the evolutionary process. On God's part there is no chance. That is all on man's part. Does he decide in the interest of *self-love*, or in obedience to love of God and its counterpart—love of man? A decision in favor of *himself* was Adam's "original sin." Man has still the fundamental decision to make between love of God and love of himself. We wonder sometimes if man ever stops to think what would happen to him "if God ever wearied of the human race"! (Winston Churchill.)

Since all man's ability to think has come from God, all the ideas you or I or anyone have ever had have come from beyond our own minds. This is true whether a new thought comes as science, or religion, or in the invention of a tool. Just as in the story of Adam, who was put into a garden "to dress it and keep it," so we are to take the God-given ideas and use them for whatever purpose we decide. We are too apt to think that we *created* the ideas that come to us. We only receive them, and go to work on them, use them, sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly. Atomic energy, for example . . . Did man receive that cosmic power for a death-dealing purpose or for peaceful use?

Only man of all creation on the planet can think these things through. Thinking man is *the* phenomenon of the earth. He can look back, sum up all the earth and see his beginnings in it. Is it not now clear that when man looks at evolution he is looking at *himself*? He *is* evolution. He sees the stages by which this earth has led up to MAN. At every step a call from God; at every step an answer. Had there been no answer, man would have been doomed to the same failure to evolve as were the innumerable tryouts, dead ends and experiments in evolution.

. . . we are not saying enough when we say that evolution . . . only needs to look at itself in the mirror to perceive itself in all its depths and to decipher itself. In addition it becomes free to *dispose of itself*—it can give itself or refuse itself. Not only do we read in our slightest acts the secret of its proceedings; but . . . we hold it in our hands, responsible for its past and its future.

Is this grandeur or servitude? Therein lies the whole problem of action. (P. 225)

There are innumerable critical points on the way, but a halt or reversion is impossible, and for the simple reason that *every increase of internal vision is essentially the germ of a further vision* which includes all the others and carries still farther on. (P. 230)

The Christian Mission

One day early in Christian history a wind-driven, flame-lit energy descended upon a small group of ordinary men beaten down by grief and despair. It changed the thinking of the whole group. An utterly unknown love flowed into them, and flowed through them toward all the world. It was like an electric shock. They knew it did not originate in themselves. They immediately began to give out love to friend and foe alike, caring nothing for ridicule, persecution, martyrdom. It was the birth-day of the Christian Church.

In order to distinguish this love from all others, they gave it the name Agape, which meant in the Greek tongue "caring for, affection." Teilhard does not use the word in *The Phenomenon of Man*, but he lived it in his life. It is the word almost invariably used in the New Testament for "love." The difference between Agape and all other love is that Agape comes from God, and flows through the individual Christian in love toward others. Self-love is a perversion of it. An inward gathering of self-interest. God's love cannot be earned even by good deeds. It cannot be bought. It is offered freely to the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, as the energy from beyond us radiates to all.

It is a foretaste of that "harmonious collectivity" of

persons Teilhard sees as increasingly evident here on earth that shall culminate in the final last step of present evolution and lead into the Kingdom of Heaven. Of all God's calls to man, it is the mightiest, deepest voice.

The first sentence in the Preface of *The Phenomenon of Man* is this: "If this book is to be properly understood, it must be read . . . purely and simply as a scientific treatise" (p. 29). More than half of the book is written from the point of view of a scientist speaking to other scientists. In the latter part Teilhard deals openly with the spiritual energies underlying scientific theory. Some critics have charged him with inconsistency in turning a "scientific treatise" into religious conclusions. His whole purpose in *The Phenomenon*, however, is to lay before the world of science and the world of religion the controversial proposition that there is no actual opposition between the two. "The same life animates both." "Pure religion and undefiled" must sooner or later be acknowledged as pure science. There is no inconsistency in Teilhard's own position. Some who are unlearned in scientific matters yet simple believers in Christian faith as they have received it suddenly find, as they read *The Phenomenon*, their faith immeasurably deepened. With it comes a realization that many others who have been troubled by a conviction that something is lacking in organized faith today that was yesterday more satisfying will find in *The Phenomenon* the reason for their deepening hunger, and a great satisfaction in clearer understanding.

A leading scientist, in paraphrasing upon the next

move in the evolution of mankind as Teilhard presents it in *The Phenomenon* (cf. pp. 274-85), has this to say:

. . . the increase of human numbers combined with the improvement of human communications has fused all parts of the noosphere together, has increased the tension within it, and has caused it to become "infolded" upon itself, and therefore more highly organised. . . . Mankind . . . will accordingly achieve more intense, more complex, and more *integrated mental activity*, which can guide the human species up the path of progress to higher levels.—
JULIAN HUXLEY (Introduction to *The Phenomenon*, p. 17)

This is a lucid, honest summary. It indicates what the majority of scientists may make, at the present moment, of Teilhard's outline of the future. But there is more to it than this scientist has said here. It leaves out the very heart of the matter by misreading the clues of science. About what does "a more complex, integrated mental activity" *center* to enable it to "guide the human species up the path of progress to higher levels"? What is the focus, the point of superior drawing power to move the circumference? Increasing scientific curiosity? Discovery? Knowledge? Desire for power? Sincere concern for the good of mankind based on the humanistic goodness of man's own nature? Are any of these things, or all of them together, enough? No. We cannot raise ourselves by our

own bootstraps. Science shows that without initiating cosmic energy to attract successive stages of planetary growth, nothing on the planet, including man himself, could move, act, think. The evolutionary design calls for a *superior* energy, a point outside the consciousness of man himself, to enter and animate man's inward thinking. The pattern on the chart of science is the same pattern that applies in the realm of spiritual energy. There *must* be Christ: "Without me ye can do nothing." Teilhard put it like this:

I have tried to show that we can hope for no progress on earth without the primacy and triumph of the *personal* at the summit of *mind*. And at the present moment Christianity is the *unique* current of thought, on the entire surface of the noosphere, which is sufficiently audacious and sufficiently progressive to lay hold of the world, at the level of effectual practice, in an embrace, at once already complete, yet capable of indefinite perfection, where faith and hope reach their fulfillment in love. *Alone*, unconditionally alone, in the world today, Christianity shows itself able to reconcile, in a single living act, the All and the Person. Alone, it can bend our hearts not only to the service of that tremendous movement of the world which bears us along, but beyond, to embrace that movement in love.

In other words . . . Christianity fulfils all the conditions we are entitled to expect from a religion of the future; and that hence, through it, the principal axis of evolution truly passes . . . (Pp. 297-98)

"For each of us life revolves around us with a different center; each such orbit has its place in the universe of which we are an essential part. We are participating in what might be called a planetary groping toward a *new type of collective thinking*." (From a letter by Dr. George Barbour.)

This means that even now, as you are reading and pondering these things, you are being moved along in a great irresistible tide; you are taking part in evolution. Its seeds are growing in your own mind, according to its laws of inevitable development *forward* or reversal. The steady waves of evolution have swept through the planet from far away; "they set out at the same time as the first stars." Along their way they have created everything on earth. You are feeling the call of evolution as new ideas are welling up in your mind. You are being asked to participate in a new heaven on a new earth, by giving your own personal impetus to the whole great cosmic drama.

. . . the movement of *our souls* expresses and measures the very stages of progress of evolution itself . . . our modern minds (. . . inasmuch as they are modern) will never find rest until they settle down to

this view. On this summit and on this summit alone are repose and illumination waiting for us. (P. 220)

"The stuff of the universe" has become thinking. *Your* thinking is a part of the cutting edge of human progress. Once the cutting edge was the energy of the life cell; today it is the energy of all human thought.

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—II CORINTHIANS 4:6

We are not asked to give up any of the precious treasure of our faith. We add new truth to all that is true in it. The knowledge that the earth was not flat must have come with some perplexity to the minds of men at first, but a flat planet did not have to be painfully torn from consciousness. It quietly faded from the human mind. Nobody had to *do* anything to a flat earth. It did not destroy man's faith in divine reality to find out that ignorance had to be replaced by knowledge. In the same way, our church organizations and our fundamental faiths will not dissolve under the impact of new truth discerned by science. They will continue to grow and by growth to inspire and comfort *increasingly*. There is continual need of renewal in human organization, based on the continuing growth of truth in every age. But it is more important that lay members of the Christian or-

ganization grasp these facts than that ministers, theologians and seminaries debate them. Transition from outworn tradition to new truths comes more readily to minds unfixed in doctrines now changing with the entering in of new truth. "The common people heard him gladly." Common people established the Christian movement in the first place. They continue its evolution today. As a majority of thinkers inside and outside the churches see and accept these truths, confused leaders of organized Christianity will adjust their thought. Truth is already having tremendous effect on traditions, as witness recent ecumenical events in world history. Science is contributing to the freedom of the human mind, and will continue to do so as its basic relation to religion is recognized.

According to science, the universe is "a collector of energy." According to Christian faith, it is a collector of *persons* who have *individually answered the call of love*, the spiritual reality of energy. "God is operating at the core of the thinking mass" of mankind. That means that He is operating *personally with persons*, radiating His love into the hearts and minds of each of us. Were God not a Supreme Person, how could He draw us toward Him *as persons*? He has evolved us, each with his separate mind and heart to answer Him *as a person to a Person*. Our individual selves are not melted into one in Him, as salt melts into the sea. That is a pagan notion neither Christian nor scientific. Each one of us is ". . . an absolutely original centre in which the universe reflects itself in a unique and inimitable way. And all

those centres are our very selves and personalities. The very centre of our consciousness . . . that is the essence which God-Omega . . . must reclaim." (P. 261.)

No one is a duplicate of anyone else. However much one may love another person and feel at one with him, one is forever one's self, different, but with a difference that can only increase the unity in which we shall be drawn nearer each other and nearer the Supreme Center, Omega. "The more they are grouped under a Personal, the more personal they will become" (Teilhard de Chardin, *Cahiers*, p. 27).

It is *our* very selfhood God wants. The best we can give back to Him is our personal, adoring love, our own unique way of love for each other: living gratitude, living delight in the world about us, in the variety of His calls to us, and the answers to those calls we may give to each other and to God-Omega. ". . . each particular consciousness remaining conscious of itself . . . each particular consciousness becoming still more itself and thus more clearly distinct from the others the closer it gets to them in Omega" (p. 261).

Already, before it is more widely accepted, we can see that we have come to a place of deeper understanding and wider dimensions. We can see that the joy that is set before us is that "under the influence of increasing union" we are being drawn into closer contact with those who "across time, space and evil" have listened to the calls from God and have answered them to the very end. Also that we are granted a less vague concept of "the Kingdom of Heaven," the next evolutionary step, a more personal relationship with Christ and a far greater

assurance of our reunion with those "we have loved long since and lost awhile." These Christian convictions are being restored to many who have lost them under the pressure of modern thought and the confusing spatial enlargement of science. *The Phenomenon of Man* is turning the tides of atheism, humanism and anxiety toward a renewal of Christian faith. Of all human organizations, only the Christian Church has openly accepted Christ as the Way and Love as the basis of Life. May the members of his church, and all who believe "expressly or implicitly in Love," walk in that Way. What else is worth living for?

CATHERINE ALLER lives in a quiet corner of Connecticut. Her father was for sixty years pastor of the oldest church in the township, which, in accord with the constitution of the young Colony, had to be "gathered" into a religious denomination before the town of Salisbury could be founded. Mrs. Aller has published two books of poetry and two essays, "The Greatest Word in the World" and "Only in Agape." Both essays are studies of the Greek word *agape*, chosen by the earliest Christians to define the particular kind of love for God and for one another in that first period of church history. Both essays are appeals for an ecumenical movement toward Christian unity founded on this type of love. They are concerned more with the spirit of Christianity than with tradition and dogma and the multiplication of organization within the churches.

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215

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